

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The pesticide uses of all of the Level I pesticides have been canceled for domestic use in the U.S. The flame retardant uses of mirex were curtailed in the 1970's and replaced by other products. All the Level I pesticides but chlordane have not been in production in the U.S. for many years. Chlordane continued to be produced in the U.S. for export by the product's sole manufacturer, Velsicol Corporation. In 1997 Velsicol announced that the production of both chlordane and heptachlor would cease.

While domestic production has ceased and pesticide uses have been canceled, these pesticides continue to have an environmental presence. That is not surprising, considering the large use rates of the 1960's and 70's coupled with their persistence and atmospheric deposition from long range sources. The environmental concentrations, however, have shown a general decline in most media over the years, with a few exceptions. These exceptions, such as the concentration levels of toxaphene in Lake Superior, the surficial sediment concentrations of dieldrin in Lake Michigan and the atmospheric concentration of DDT near South Haven, Michigan, as noted in the report, merit further study.

While environmental concentrations in the Great Lakes Basin media have been generally declining for the past twenty years, and current contamination levels are well below drinking water standards, concerns remain because the substances persist and bio-accumulate in fish and wildlife. There continue to be fish consumption advisories based on unacceptable levels of these pesticides in sport and commercial fish.

All pesticide uses for all Level I pesticides have been canceled. The production facilities within the U.S. have been closed. Although evidence of purposeful releases has not been identified, the potential release from contaminated sites and remaining unused stocks is still possible. However, the declining concentrations indicate that such possible releases are likely to be small. Because some Level I pesticide concentrations in the Great Lakes are still above Water Quality Criteria, and fish advisories are required, continued monitoring is necessary. However, these options are in place and on-going.

For these reasons, we believe that the United States has met the principal intent of the Challenge, even though the statement "...no longer use or release..." can never be confirmed as long as unused stocks and contaminated sites exist.